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145 The desirability of entertaining the Pulayas in the subordinate ranks of the State service.

Mr. Aiyan Kali (Member, Nominated) said that the Government had promised, at the last session of the Assembly, to consider favourably the question of appointing the Pulayas in the subordinate ranks of the State service. He was aware that the departments the Pulayas could now be admitted to were few in number. He therefore requested that the Government might be pleased to issue orders for their free employment in the departments named below and in the way suggested :—

(1) There were now some Pulayas in the Government Press employed as piece-workers. He requested that they might be taken into the permanent service and also a few others who knew composing well.

(2) The Pulayas were now freely employed as coolies in the Public Works Department. A few others who were sufficiently educated might be given small appointments such as maistries.

(3) He had supplied a list of hospitals with Pulaya wards for the appointment of Pulayas as warders in them on the requisition of the Government; but he was unable to know what action, if any, was taken on the same. He prayed that early orders be issued to appoint Pulaya warders in all of them.

(4) In the Forest Department, the Pulayas might with advantage be appointed as watchers and guards and he therefore requested that they be appointed as such.

(5) The School of Arts also had several works on which the Pulayas could be profitably employed.

The above were some of the departments of the State where the Pulayas could, in the Member's opinion, be freely appointed. He requested that they be appointed wherever, in the opinion of the Government, any special technical or higher educational qualifications were not essential.

Dewan's reply.—The matter will be enquired into. It is a good idea to employ the Pulayas more largely in the Forest Department.

146. The disabilities of the depressed classes of Nanjanad, with special reference to the Pariahs of Thovala and Agastiswaram.

Mr. G. Jesudasen (Member, Nominated) said that he was one of those whose life-work was devoted to the moral and spiritual elevation of the depressed classes of South Travancore. The depressed classes in South Travancore meant only certain classes who were acknowledged socially, morally, mentally and pecuniarily as backward. They were known as the "Panchamas" in the Madras Presidency. They consisted of Pariahs, Pallas and Koravas, of whom the Pariahs predominated. They were engaged in field labour. The agricultural well-being of Nanjanad was bound with that of the Pariahs who actually cultivated the land and not with that of the few land-owning communities. It is the Pariahs who, at the sweat of their brow, helped to fill the barns of the land-owing classes with grain, and the corresponding privileges, nay even the wages enjoyed by the Pariahs, were almost *nil*. They were not thought to have

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any right to claim wages, at least increased wages. Those circumstances accounted for the chronic state of abject poverty and degradation in which they were found at the present day. The part played by them in the agricultural prosperity of Nanjanad was so very important that their claims for a more sympathetic and humane treatment should deserve the early consideration of the Government. They had no land to live in. Their dwellings stood on no more than a cent of ground a-piece on which had to be housed their oxen and plough. Their villages consisted of huts grouped together with no space between them and naturally kept in the most dirty way. In some of the huts two or three families lived together for want of land for habitation purposes. During seasons of epidemic those villages suffered most. Since cholera in particular was a water-borne disease, he prayed that efforts should be made to provide good drinking water for those poor people. He suggested the sinking of tube wells in those localities as a precaution against cholera or any other water-borne disease.

Dewan.—The sinking of tube wells in the Pariah quarters is a good idea and will be noted.

The Member continuing said that, during the recent cholera epidemic which still lingered in South Travancore, the mortality among the Pariahs was very great. He regretted to observe that not even scant attention was paid by the Sanitary officials to the suffering humanity among the lower orders. Their loss was a serious economical loss in the interests of agriculture which the Government should try their utmost to obviate. He therefore requested that a well-manned and efficient staff should be sent out into Nanjanad, early in October every year, thoroughly equipped with cholera medicines, and it should be recalled only about the end of February when the cholera scourge usually abated.

Some of the tank-beds in Nanjanad had now become unnecessary on account of the Kodayar water and a good number of them were being sold to the people every year. The Member prayed that a few tank-beds in each taluk should be set apart for the habitation purposes of the Pariahs of Nanjanad.

Another serious disability of the Pariahs was the absence of special educational facilities to their children. The Pariah boys found it extremely difficult to prosecute their studies in the Sirkar schools, even where such schools were thrown open to them, on account of the want of sympathy of the high castes, the unkind and unsympathetic attitude of the caste teachers and the spirit of aloofness on the part of the juvenile schoolmates. He particularly instanced the case of the Sirkar Lower Grade Elementary School for boys at Thazhakudi, in which the then headmaster, in view to prevent the school becoming a mixed school, at first asked the few low caste children who sought admission to come again in the beginning of the next week, on the pretext that it would take till then to swing the school into working order. Before the Panchama lads returned, the headmaster (now transferred) completed the regulation strength of the classes and shut them out. The

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school remained even today a caste school. Moreover, they were intellectually far below the other castes and would not be able to study along with them. He therefore prayed for the establishment of separate schools for them, with special fee concessions. He suggested the restoration of Dewan Madhava Rao's Panchama Education Code at least for 12 years and the same being made applicable to the "backward" schools already in existence and those that might be opened hereafter in the south; also, that the few boys that went in for Secondary education in the Government schools be exempted from the payment of any fee. He added that when the Mahomedans, who were pecuniarily far above these Pariahs, were allowed half-fee concessions in all the Sirkar schools, there was sufficient justification in exempting the depressed classes like the Pariahs from the payment of fees in all the Government schools of the State.

He submitted that difficulty was now exprienced in providing trained teachers for the backward schools. The four backward class training schools started in the time of Mr. Madhava Rao were now open to all castes and the backward classes derived the least benefit therefrom; and all of them were almost closed to the private school managers. The Government had also made no provision to supply trained teachers to Missionary and other private bodies who had already sunk enormous amounts in the betterment of the education of the people of the State, and the managers of the private schools were compelled to employ trained teachers. The rigid insistence under such circumstances was unfair. He requested that all the Training Schools should be thrown open to the private teachers also.

Dewan.—Are not the Missionary bodies training their own men?

Member.—No, it is not so in South Travancore.

Dewan.—How are they finding their teachers?

Member.—We are employing trained men.

Dewan.—Do you ask for a Special Training School?

Member.—Yes. We have now about 300 schools. Even today, we want about 12 trained teachers, for whom we would be prepared to offer salaries even slightly higher than those paid by the Government.

Dewan.—The difficulty is that your teachers do not possess the minimum general qualifications prescribed for admission into the Training Schools. They must have at least worked up the Higher Grade Elementary Classes. Where will you get your men?

Member.—Some concession should be given. Boys of Forms III and IV should be permitted to be admitted.

Dewan.—Why don't you get these boys through the Vernacular training schools first?

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Member.—Boys who had read up to Form V in the English schools are compelled to join and study in the Class V in the Vernacular schools. Provision should be made to admit boys of Forms IV and V into Class VII of the Vernacular schools.

Dewan.—That should be separately moved by you.

In conclusion, the Member requested the early attention of the Government to the points mentioned by him for the amelioration of the Pariahs of Thovala and Agastiswaram.

Dewan's reply.—The Dewan Peishkar of Padmanabhapuram will be asked to report on the condition of the Pariahs of Thovala and Agastiswaram, about whom the Member has specially spoken.

147. **The desirability of changing the market day at Punalur from Sunday to Monday.**

Mr. T. A. Fernandez (Member, Nominated) said that the market at Punalur was held on Mondays before 1085 M. E. Since then, the market day was changed to Sunday on the representation of a European Rubber Planter. With the opening of plantation bazaars in all important centres, the necessity for continuing the Sunday market in Punalur did not exist. He therefore requested that the Government might be pleased to change the market day again to Monday, thereby conforming to the religious requirements of a large body of Christians at Punalur, who were now obliged to break the sabbath as the market was being held on Sundays.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

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